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hang in air and become inexplicable. By showing that Jesus considered his miracles as an essential part of his work, bound up in the unity of his consciousness, the writer has made it impossible to reject the miracles without seriously impairing, if not destroying, the value of Jesus' testimony to his own being and work.

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LA NOTION BIBLIQUE DE LA DESCENTE DU CHRIST AUX ENFERS. Par C. BRUSTON; *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie*, January 1897, pp. 57-78; March 1897, pp. 169-82. (Since reissued separately, with the addition of a discussion of 1 Tim. 3:16, under the title, "La Descente du Christ aux enfers." Paris: Fischbacher. 1897.)

THE amplified form of the Apostles' Creed says that Jesus descended into hell. In the teaching of Jesus there is not the slightest basis for this view. The word in John 20:17 plainly refers only to the time *since* the resurrection. The thought of Acts 2:27 is that the soul of Jesus did not come into the possession of sheol. Had the poet wished to say that God would not leave his soul *in* sheol, he would have said לִשְׁאוֹל, and not בְּשְׁאוֹל.

In spite of the clear word of Jesus, the belief early spread in the church that his soul descended into hades in the moment of death, and that in the interval before his resurrection he conquered the powers of hell, preached the gospel to the dead, and delivered the Old Testament saints out of the subterranean regions. Biblical basis for these views are Eph. 4:8 and 1 Pet. 3:19. These passages differ in two points from the view of the early church.

(1) According to ecclesiastical authors and the Apostles' Creed this descent was *before* the resurrection of Jesus; according to Paul and Peter it was *after* the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus.

(2) According to the majority of the fathers the descent of Jesus had as its object the deliverance of the righteous of the old covenant from hades; according to Paul its object was to conquer the powers of darkness, and according to Peter it was to announce the gospel to the spirits most guilty and most severely punished.

In Eph. 4:8-10 the word *πρωτον*, which is added to *κατέβη*, is the work of some copyist who sought to conform the text to the current belief. The passage speaks of what is done by the exalted Christ. The descent into hell is spiritual, like his descent to his church.

One is tempted to compare Col. 2:15 with the passage in Eph., but this cannot be done, for the *principalities* here thought of are not infernal, but human. They are the princes of this world (1 Cor. 2:6-8).

The thought of Peter (1 Pet. 3:14-22) agrees essentially with that of Paul. Peter makes special mention of the most culpable, but his *καὶ τοῖς* implies general preaching. The *spirits in prison* are not men, but rebellious angels (see Gen. 6:1-4; Enoch 6-16). Their guilt was greater than that of any men, because they were celestial and immortal spirits. The *patience* of God and the *small number* of the saved are mentioned to set in plainer light the disobedience of the angels. This interpretation of vss. 18-20 accords with the preceding exhortation.

The thought of Paul and Peter agrees with the essential principles of Christianity. It is natural to think that, after toiling for the salvation of men on the earth, Jesus has continued his work, not only in the visible world, but also in the invisible. Could he who came to seek and to save the lost leave without witness the millions who died before he came and those who in subsequent times have died without knowledge of him? It is permitted to think that this preaching to the spirits has not been in vain, especially since a word of Jesus justifies us in believing that all sins except that against the Holy Spirit may be forgiven in the world to come.

The article of descent into hell ought to be suppressed by the Reformed churches, not as being inexact in itself, but as being badly placed in the symbol, and consequently giving rise to various false ideas.

In the second part of this discussion, a synopsis of which is not given for lack of space, the author speaks of the substitution of the ecclesiastical idea of the descent into hell for the apostolic idea, and of the successive deformations of Christian eschatology. He regards the ecclesiastical doctrine of preaching to the dead as a logical consequence of the idea of the resurrection of the flesh, and he holds that this doctrine came into the church in a reaction against gnosticism. The fact that the preaching was put between the death and resurrection of Jesus is thought to be due to Matt. 27:52-53. The deformations of Christian eschatology are traced to Jewish notions and to the reaction against docetism.

This article of M. Bruston is one of great interest and value. It shows the utter untenableness of the view that Jesus descended into hell or into hades between his death and his resurrection. It argues with force, if not conclusively, for a spiritual activity of the exalted Christ in the entire invisible world.

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